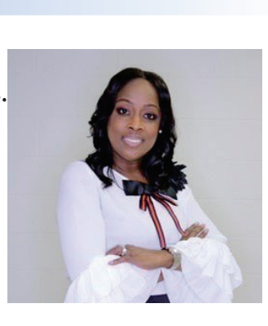
THE CITY OF YPSILANTI NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2021

FROM THE DESK OF THE CITY MANAGER



Greetings from the City Manager's Office. As the days get shorter and colder, I am reminded of how difficult last winter was for our most vulnerable homeless residents. Amid COVID-19 many doors to businesses were closed that commonly provided a place for warmth and restrooms. Churches and other organizations that may have hosted warming centers in the past were unable to do so and it left an indelible impression as yet another consequence of the pandemic.

Staff and I sought to correct this as a top priority this year with a proposal to use the Ypsilanti Freighthouse as a daytime warming center and I am happy to say this new service will begin 4 days a week and provide meals and transportation to an overnight shelter from November 2021 – March 2022. I appreciate the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County for their partnership in this new endeavor and I am looking forward to addressing this problem compassionately.

I want to remind everyone that the COVID-19 pandemic remains a very serious threat in our community and the best way we can support one another is by getting vaccinated and following state and county guidance to reduce the spread of the virus. It is so important that we work together as a community to keep one another safe and if there is anyone out there who still needs a vaccination appointment and cannot find one please do not hesitate to reach out. City Hall has returned to normal business hours so please do not hesitate to stop in and know that we are here to help. I am wishing you all a beautiful and safe Autumn season

BLACK LIVES MATTER MURAL

Last month the Black Lives Matter mural at Riverside Park was vandalized. We are sickened by this horrible act of destruction but will not be deterred from declaring that Black Lives do matter. This is a timely reminder of all the work that remains to be done but our community will not be divided. We will overcome this and rally together to restore the mural.

Most importantly, we will continue the important work of restoring historically marginalized communities of color. I have been moved by the outpouring of support from members of our community who want to donate their time, energy, and resources into restoring the mural. This act of hate does not represent us, rather the very opposite. We will instead be defined by the way we respond to this evil act of cowardice. The vandalism took place in the shadows and cover of night, but our restoration will take place in the light of day for all to see our commitment. Law enforcement is investigating the matter and we will bring those responsible to justice.

PEN DAM REMOVAL

An upcoming Town Hall for Pen Dam will be scheduled in October. Thanks to all those who participated in the engagement sessions over the last several weeks and to our partners on the project at the Huron River Watershed Council. For more information on the public engagement ad hoc committee, project updates, or upcoming meetings click here.

BUSINESS UPDATES

I am very excited to see two new businesses open recently at key locations in Downtown and Depot Town after many years of rehabilitation. After many years and $10 million in renovations, the Thompson Block in Ypsilanti's Depot Town is now open. Thompson and Co feature Southern cuisine in an 11,000-square-foot space that exemplifies the historic character of the building. The Thompson Block renovation was many years in the making after a devastating fire in 2009. There are almost 50 employees now working at Thompson and Co with plans to open Mash Whiskey Bar in the other half of the building's lower level sometime in October, bringing the total number of employees to about 85. Hours of operation are 4-10 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 4 p.m. to midnight Fridays, noon to midnight Saturdays, and noon to 10 p.m. Sundays.

In Downtown, the Ypsi Cocktail Club opened on September 22nd after several years of building rehabilitation and façade work at 102 W Michigan Ave. The Ypsi Cocktail Club is a tasting room associated with the Ann Arbor Distilling Company. They feature handcrafted spirits that use ingredients that are sourced locally within eight miles of their location. 100 W Michigan, the former site of Dalat, will also be opening to the public in the coming months with a new restaurant concept by the same group at 102 W Michigan.

YCS PARTNERSHIP

YCS and City of Ypsilanti is collaborating for better schools and better community. City Council recently allocated $25,000 from state revenue sharing for recreational marijuana to Ypsilanti Community Schools with $10,000 earmarked for the arts program and $15,000 for sports programs. Additionally, we will be presenting YCS a "Key to the City" on Friday October 15th at the Ypsilanti Community High School football game. Come out and support your local football team and witness this historic occasion!

EDA GRANT TO SUPPORT BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ann Arbor SPARK was recently awarded more than $2 million in federal funding to build an underground fiber optic cable between downtown Ann Arbor and downtown Ypsilanti. The project is funded through the Economic Development Administration, which received $1.5 billion in funding through the CARES Act to bolster post-pandemic recovery. The 20-mile stretch of underground fiber optic cable will create development opportunities for businesses in the area. Fiber optic cable will also provide a stronger internet connection for residents in those areas. The City of Ypsilanti is proud to be a partner with Ann Arbor SPARK and City of Ann Arbor on this important infrastructure project set to begin in 2022.

GFOA AWARD ISSUED TO CITY OF YPSILANTI

Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to City of Ypsilanti for its comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. The report has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the report.

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. I want to congratulate Finance Director Rheagan Basabica and his staff for the incredible work and this achievement.

EMU HOMECOMING

EMU celebrates its 100th Homecoming celebration this year! Several events are scheduled all week through EMU including the YpsiTasty Grub Crawl, campus tours, pancake breakfast, band and choral concerts, and the Homecoming Football game against Miami University! A limited number of spirit boxes are available for purchase to show your Eagle pride. Read more about EMU's homecoming traditions, timeline, and browse photo galleries here.

220 N. PARK

We are excited to announce that an options agreement has been approved with Renovare Development at the 220 N Park site. City Council approved this options agreement on October 5th following months of public engagement sessions regarding the development. We appreciate everyone who participated in these meetings and provided feedback. The City has a ton of information to share about site plan, conceptual illustrations, and frequently asked questions. More meetings and information will be coming soon. Please subscribe to the city news flash that can be found here.

You may also visit our website to learn more and please do not hesitate to reach us with questions or

FROM THE DESK OF HR MANAGER KIM JONES

Last week the City Manager, Clerk Mayor, Councilmember Wilcoxen and I attended the MML Conference in Grand Rapids. At the last session, the City Manager received an award congratulating her on her service on the board. Additionally, City Manager McMullan is attending the ICMA (International City/County Management Association) Annual Conference 10/2-10/7 in Portland, Oregon where she will be presenting on behalf of the Michigan Municipal Leagues 16-50 Women's Leadership Program. Congrats to City Manager McMullan being recognized by a statewide organization for all the hard work you do.

FOOD PANTRY AT THE FIRE STATION

Lastly, we want to recognize girl scout troop 40733 who placed a little food pantry in front of the Fire Station. The food pantry is for people to drop off some non-perishable food items or take if needed. Thanks so much for your service and generous idea!

FOOD PANTRY

FROM THE DESK OF MAYOR LOIS ALLEN RICHARDSON

Greetings! This month is ushering in the fall season in all its glory, along with many events both local and national.

October is Domestic Violence month. Unfortunately, the stress of lock down, quarantines, illness, and unemployment during the pandemic has increased domestic violence reports. Everyone deserves to live in safety and peace. Children deserve to live without fear. On Saturday, October 2, Women and Men Working for Change will host their fifth domestic violence walk at 8 a.m., at Parkridge Park. Please join us.

The week of October 3 through 9 is Mental Health Awareness week. If you or someone you know needs counseling or help, please feel free to contact our community mental health at (734) 222-3500. We truly are our brother/sisters' keepers!

September 15 - October 15 is National Hispanic Heritage Month: We recognized the contributions and influence of Hispanic Americans to the history, culture, and achievements in Ypsilanti and the United States.

A special "thank you" to all those who supported L.O.V.E. Is the Answer Day of Reconciliation on September 17, 2021. It is observed internationally every year. Our support from sponsors powered a memorable event. Many thanks to EMU, UMCU, University Bank, and so many individuals. It was a beautiful sunny day and L.O.V.E. was truly in the air. If you couldn't make it, you missed a treat.

September was a challenging month; the escalation of violence and racism in our community raised its ugly head. Amid a time for reconciliation, building police and community relations, and promoting L.O.V.E., racism showed up boldly. While setting up the film WALKING WHILE BLACK on Thursday night September 16 in Frog Island Park, several men showed up identifying themselves as Patriots Fund US. They threatened to disrupt the showing of the film (which they did not). Then, the same group showed up in the early morning hours of Sunday September 18 to vandalize the Black Lives Matter mural at Riverside Park. They threw white paint across the lettering and tagged themselves by stenciling their group' name in red. It was impossible to remove the white paint on Sunday, but their name was not allowed to exist a day. It was spray-painted over totally and blacked out. We refuse to tolerate this behavior from insiders or outsiders as these vandals professed to be. The city workers have by now power washed their defacement. Thank you!

We must all work together to defeat racism. In all its complexity, systematic and individual racism must be rebuked. Change begins with us, as a community and individually. We can start by admitting that racism exists and monitor ourselves to examine and correct our own biases in perception. If we hear a racist remark or witness racism in any form, call it out! The persons committing the deed might not even know what they are doing or saying is racist. Let's make a dent in racism and undertake the work to bring it to an end.

Our community conversations on Race and Equity are continuing to be lively and informative. If you would like to join in, please email me. We are especially interested in listening to the voices of younger people and encourage you to contact us at the information provided below.

Unfortunately, our city is suffering from a public health crisis known as gun violence. We have been experiencing too many shooting episodes and deaths. Know that we have met with the Chief of Police, City Manager, and other officials to work towards a plan to curtail violence. Our police are working hard, but they also need our help. If we see something or hear something we need to call the Ypsilanti Police Department's Anonymous Tip Line 734-292-5429. The police can only protect residents when we step up to call for help. It is going to take all of us working together to maintain safety in our community.

Until next month stay safe, stay well, and remember the pandemic is not over! LOVE is the answer,

Lois Allen-Richardson
Mayor, City of Ypsilanti
lrichardson@cityofypsilanti.com
734-972-3673

CITY UPDATES

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS VACANCIES

Arts Commission
Commissioner
Two Youth Members

Dangerous Bldgs
Dangerous Buildings Officer

Human Relations Commission
Commissioner
Two Youth Members

Police Advisory Commission
Commissioner
Two Youth Members

Parks & Recreation Commission
Two Commissioners
Three Youth Members

Sustainability Commission
Commissioner
Two Youth Members

YDDA
Board Member

Zoning Board of Appeals
Two Commissioners

Fill out this online form if you are interested in the City of Ypsilanti Boards and Commissions.

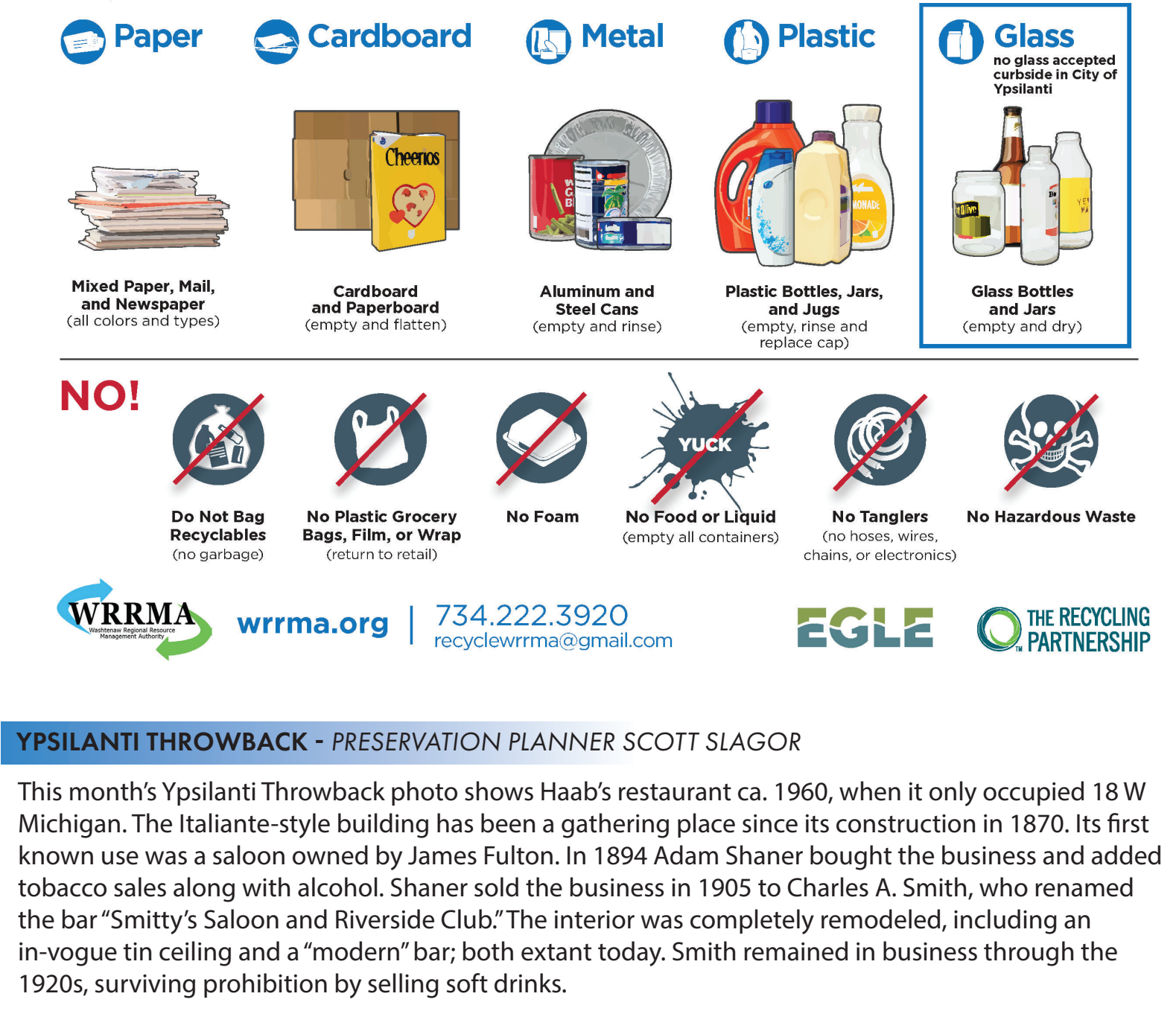
MAJOR NON-MOTORIZED IMPROVEMENTS ON THE HORIZON IN YPSILANTI

Huron, Hamilton and Washtenaw – In 2022, portions of these roads that fall under Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) control will see repaving along with pedestrian, disabled and bicycle improvements including sidewalk ramps, bike lanes, safety signage and traffic calming. This MDOT project will also address the need for a safe non-motorized crossing of Huron Street over the I-94 bridge.

Public input sessions on the Huron, Hamilton, Washtenaw project in mid-August at the Ypsilanti City Hall and Ypsilanti Township Civic Center. The Ypsilanti presentation was livestreamed by the City here, and the PowerPoint presentation is available here: MDOT presentation. Additional project information can be found here.

RECYCLING WIZARD

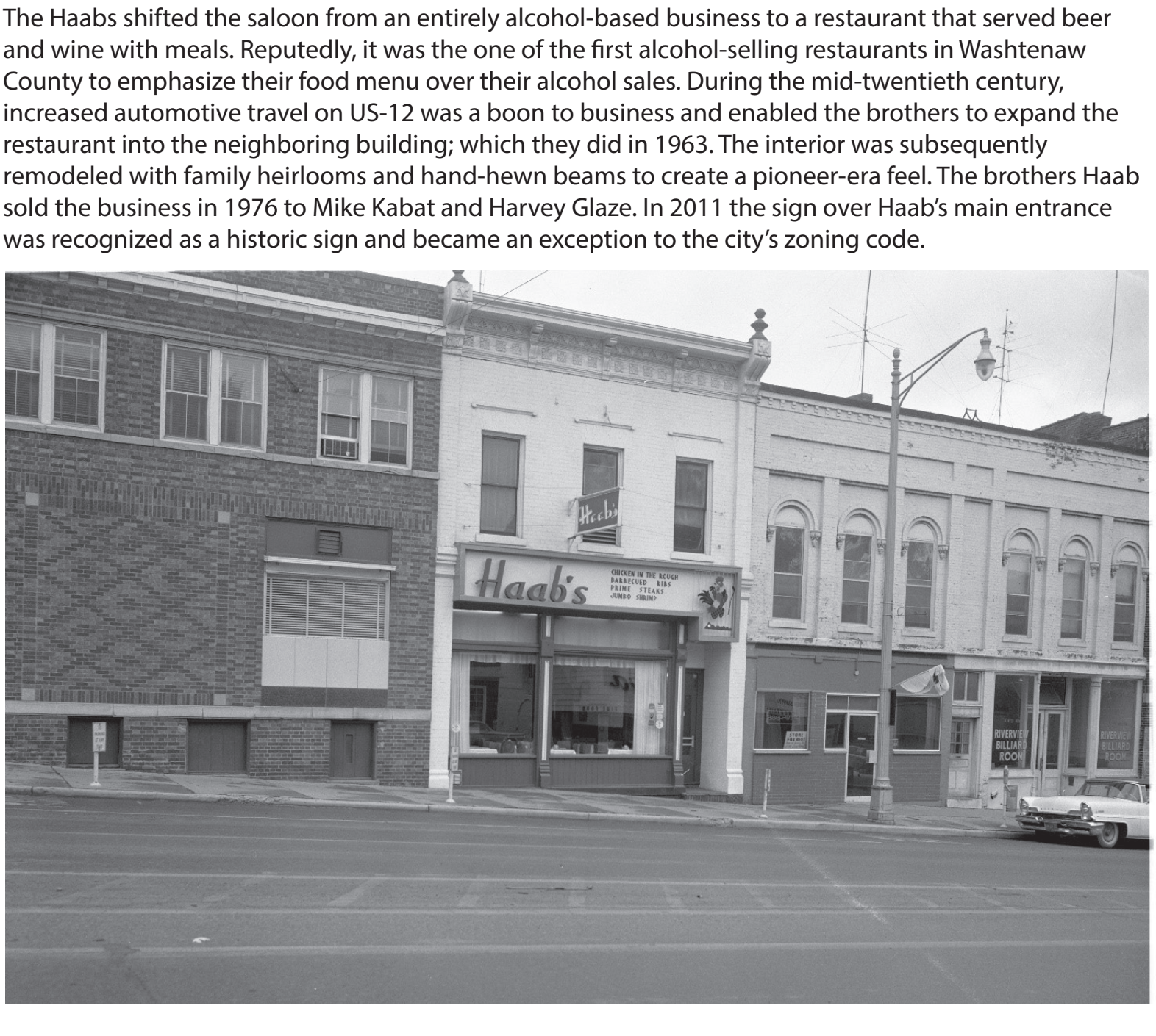
WRRMA Waste Wizard - an interactive recycling search tool!
Type the name of a waste material, and the wizard will tell you where it goes for recycling, composting or disposal. Pretty neat huh?
Find it on our recycling page!


RECYCLE THANK YOU FOR RECYCLING THESE:
Paper
Cardboard
Metal
Plastic
Glass no glass accepted curbside in City of Ypsilanti
Mixed Paper, Mail, and Newspaper (all colors and types)
Cardboard and Paperboard (empty and flatten)
Aluminum and Steel Cans (empty and rinse)
Plastic Bottles, Jars, and Jugs (empty, rinse and replace cap)
Glass Bottles and Jars (empty and dry)
NO!
Do Not Bag Recyclables (no garbage)
No Plastic Grocery Bags, Film, or Wrap (return to retail)
No Foam
YUCK
No Food or Liquid (empty all containers)
No Tanglers (no hoses, wires, chains, or electronics)
No Hazardous Waste
WRRMA
wrrma.org
734.222.3920
recyclewrrma@gmail.com
EGLE
THE RECYCLING PARTNERSHIP

YPSILANTI THROWBACK - *PRESERVATION PLANNER SCOTT SLAGOR*

This month's Ypsilanti Throwback photo shows Haab's restaurant ca. 1960, when it only occupied 18 W Michigan. The Italiante-style building has been a gathering place since its construction in 1870. Its first known use was a saloon owned by James Fulton. In 1894 Adam Shaner bought the business and added tobacco sales along with alcohol. Shaner sold the business in 1905 to Charles A. Smith, who renamed the bar "Smitty's Saloon and Riverside Club." The interior was completely remodeled, including an in-vogue tin ceiling and a "modern" bar; both extant today. Smith remained in business through the 1920s, surviving prohibition by selling soft drinks.

Prohibition ended in the early 1930s and the saloon was purchased by brothers, Oscar and Otto Haab. The Haabs shifted the saloon from an entirely alcohol-based business to a restaurant that served beer and wine with meals. Reputedly, it was the one of the first alcohol-selling restaurants in Washtenaw County to emphasize their food menu over their alcohol sales. During the mid-twentieth century, increased automotive travel on US-12 was a boon to business and enabled the brothers to expand the restaurant into the neighboring building; which they did in 1963. The interior was subsequently remodeled with family heirlooms and hand-hewn beams to create a pioneer-era feel. The brothers Haab sold the business in 1976 to Mike Kabat and Harvey Glaze. In 2011 the sign over Haab's main entrance was recognized as a historic sign and became an exception to the city's zoning code.



YPSILANTI FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

From the desk of Fire Chief Ken Hobbs

The Fire Department is proud to announce Lt. Loria was promoted to Captain and FF Gissendaner has been promoted to Lieutenant.

Loria left, Hobbs middle, Gissendaner right

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES NEWS

Fall has arrived and soon we will be cleaning up fall leaves. In some instances, this yard waste can be as much as 50 percent of the solid waste generated by the household during the fall months. Before you get out the rake and the blower, we want to highlight some potential alternatives to blowing, raking, bagging, and dragging those leaves to the curb. These alternatives are mulching or composting at home.

If you prefer to handle the leaves with as little effort as possible you should consider mulching. There are several advantages to mulching, according to Michigan State University Extension. The small decomposing leaf pieces provide nutrients for your lawn over the winter for quicker greening in the spring. They also cover any bare spots in the lawn that are good places for weed seeds to germinate. Michigan State University Extension has provided the following instructions for mulching your lawn:

"To mulch the leaves into your lawn, set your mower at its highest setting and mow as usual. Then mow again in the other direction, making a crisscross or ninety-degree pattern. There will be some leaf residue left on the lawn, but it will continue to break down and fall through the grass to reduce future weeds and provide those essential nutrients. After all, fall is the best time to feed your lawn. After several years, this mulching process can result in almost complete elimination of dandelions and crabgrass in some cases. If you start mulching as the first leaves begin to fall, you should only need to mow your lawn weekly. However, if a heavy wind occurs, it may require you to mulch the leaves more frequently. Leaves can be mulched up to approximately six inches deep and have good results depending on the type of lawn mower you are using."

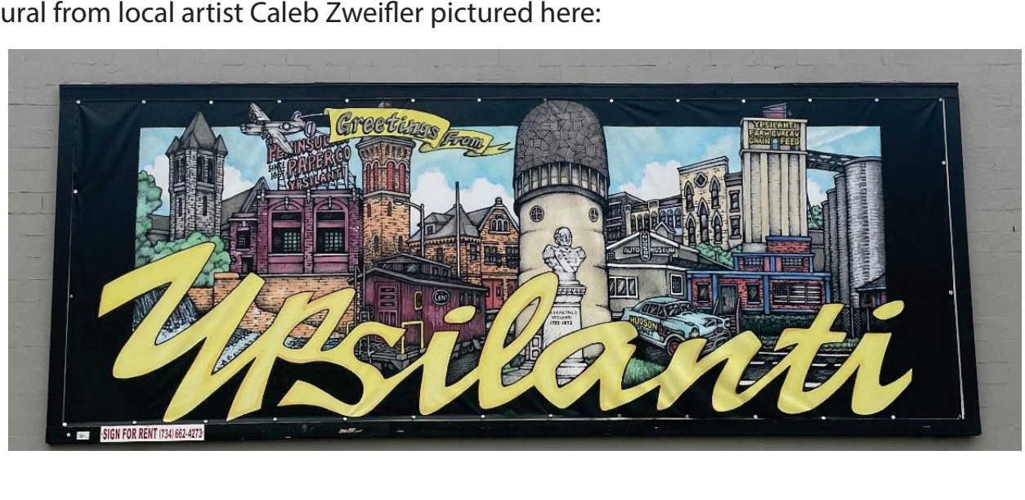
Another option for leaf waste disposal is to use the mower to mulch and bag the leaves and use those leaves as mulch around flower beds, shrubs, trees, and vegetable gardens. The leaves will provide nutrients and reduce weeds in those areas.
Another option for leaf removal is composting. Michigan State University Extension has the following information about composting:

"Another option for leaf removal is composting. This also can be done using your lawn mower. Instead of mulching them back into the lawn, collect them in the mower bag and form a pile. Since there is probably still some lawn growth, you will get some grass clippings mixed in with the chopped up leaf debris. This is good. A good compost pile needs both carbon (leaves) and nitrogen (grass) for best decomposition. And because the leaves are chopped up into smaller pieces, they will decompose easier, giving you finished compost faster.
A compost pile can be just that; a pile in an easily accessible area away from buildings and fences. Or it can be as elaborate as a three bin compost bin system where the yard waste is turned into the next bin on a temperature-dependent cycle. With either option, finished compost will be the final result."

These alternative leaf management options will create less waste at the curb and help you improve your lawn or garden next spring. You may also save some money in the process. For more information please take a look at the following Michigan State University Extension article about this subject. Thank you and have a great fall everyone.

YPSILANTI DDA UPDATES

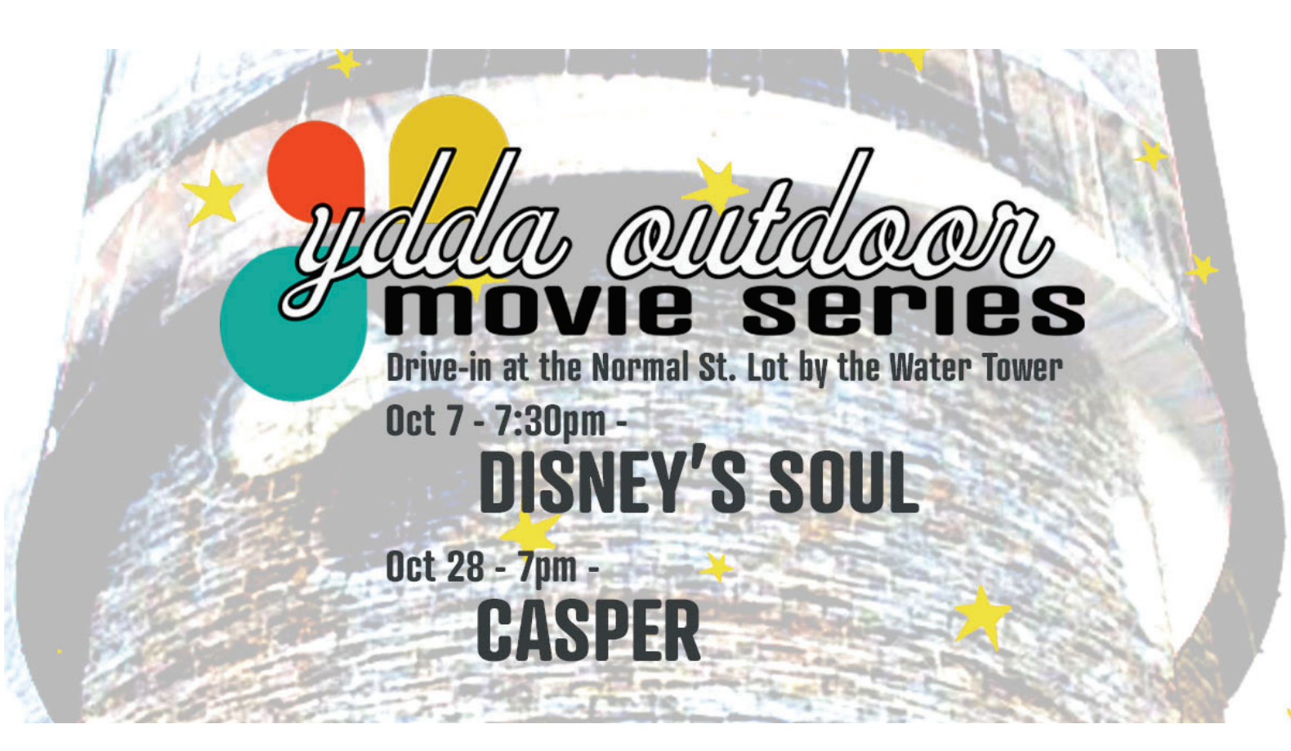
A new billboard has been installed in the North Huron Parking Lot. Check out the revived Greetings from Ypsilanti Mural from local artist Caleb Zweifler pictured here:



New Café Lighting has been installed Downtown on South Washington Street and the adjacent alleys of North Washington.

Go! ICE CREAM

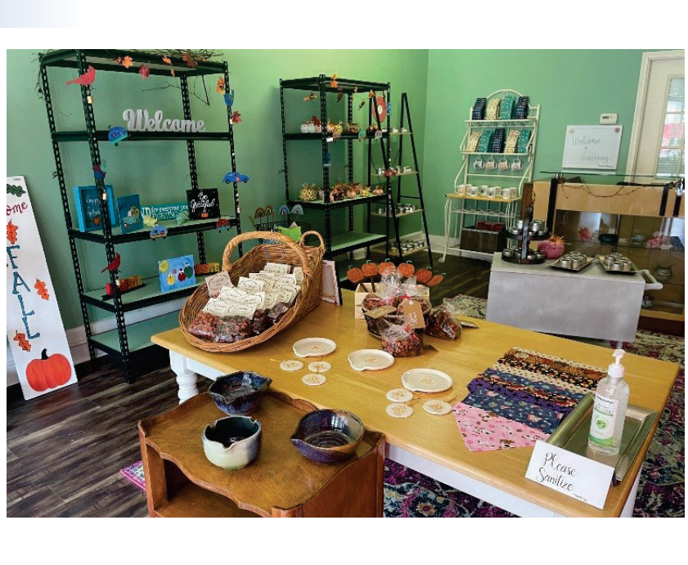
Cross Street in Depot Town is now open. Thanks to all those businesses who participated in the closure and provided music or other entertainment programming. This certainly made for a fun and safe summer in Depot Town.



Catch a free outdoor film during the Outdoor Movie Series hosted by the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority, showing films in different locations around town. Bring your own chairs, snacks and drinks for the shows in the park or show up early and find a good spot for the drive-ins. Either way, kick-back for these family-friendly films coming up this Fall! Don't miss the free Drive-in of Disney's Soul at the Water Tower on Thursday October 7th at sunset. The parking lot is addressed 811 Washtenaw Ave, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

NEW BUSINESSES IN THE DDA

Thimbleberry is the newest business in Downtown Ypsilanti and a great addition to the vibrant local retail scene. They are open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 2-8pm, Saturday Noon-8pm, and Sunday 11am-7pm at 9 S Washington. Thimbleberry features handmade gifts and home décor from local artisans. Some of the most popular offerings include handmade ceramic ramen bowls, upcycled wool mittens and saris, and locally made candles. Everything is small batch and limited supply so don't miss out on your opportunity to stop in and pick up something up next time your Downtown.



Gentle Vibes Vintage is one of the newest retail businesses on West Cross Street and a must visit next time you're out near the University. Few places elsewhere in the city can even approach the level of supremely groovy that Michelle has cultivated, and her shop is truly amazing. Located at 731 W Cross, Gentle Vibes is open Tuesday through Saturday Noon-7pm. Michelle is diligently rotating her inventory with new additions weekly and assures you the business is open despite the tumultuous construction work wrapping up this month outside the store. She also offers private shopping visits to those who are immune compromised and to set up such an appointment you may email gentlevibesvintage@gmail.com.

Bon Appetit is one of the newest restaurants on West Cross Street and a destination for those who love West African cuisine or want to try something new. Kenisha and Ismael opened Bon Appetit Cuisine in July, bringing her Ypsi roots and hospitality and his cooking skills and Ghanian ancestry together to introduce a new and unique menu of dishes from countries like Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. The flags of those West African countries line the walls of the renovated restaurant and each nation's traditional foods are represented on the menu. Ismael's mother Marima Kaba, who immigrated to the U.S. from Guinea, crafts most of the recipes and the restaurant's signature dressing. Stop in and visit them Tuesday-Saturday 11am-9pm and Sunday 11am-7pm at 421 W Cross St.

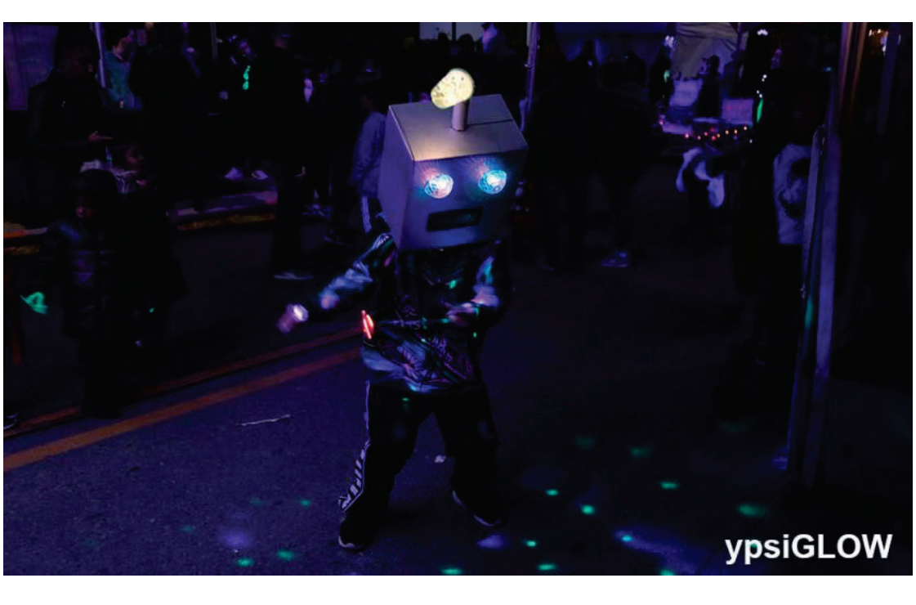
AROUND TOWN

YPSI GLOW

Here's a sneak peek of all the glowy goodness ahead for ypsiGLOW 2021...

- Art + lights by local artists all over Downtown, Depot Town, West Cross St. + Riverside Park.
- John E. Lawrence and friends on stage in Riverside Park for GLOW jazz from 7pm -9pm, with special guest performance by the Ypsilanti Community High School Choir.
- Black Jake and The Carnies in the Ziggy's alley for more music + crazy fun.
- Ypsi's Water Tower will be all aGLOW thanks to YCUA + the Ypsi DDA.
- EMU's Theater Tech, Orchestra + Dance will GLOW up Boone Hall with video projections. Theater Tech students are also helping to install lighting around town!
- Riverside Park will GLOW with Tridge + path lighting, art and pop-up performances.
- A new mural by artist Curtis Wallace and Educate Youth 501c3 kids will shine at 11 S. Washington St thanks to the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Ypsilanti DDA, and building owner Sim Sethi.
- Belly dancers, GLOW go dancers, theater in windows, hula-hooping, shadow puppets, amazing mazes, and so much more!
- Make plans to do the GLOW Stroll + Roll to check out all the happenings and share some love with local businesses as you GLOW!
- AfterGLOW at the Keystone Bar + Arcade at Bobcat Bonnie's to keep GLOWing.
- GLOW TV featuring video creations by local youth + artists will premiere at Puffer Red's + online at the ypsiGLOW Facebook event.
- All sorts of GLOWmaking fun all October with community partners like the Ypsilanti District Library, Ann Arbor Hands On Museum, and more.

So much GLOW to make Ypsi shine its brightest yet! Stay tuned for all the details HERE!



YPSI GLOW

Following Halloween weekend, bring your jack-o-lanterns to Frog Island for this free event and help light up the park! Join others and see hundreds of picturesque pumpkins light up for a particularly eerie and family-friendly post Halloween fun on November 1st from 7-10pm. Dance to live music from Black Jake & the Carnies and become mesmerized by fire-spinning performances from Ypsi Spin Jam!

ALL HALLOWS ILLUMINATION

All Hallows Illumination
Frog Island Park

STAY SAFE YPSILANTI

Do you have something happening in the city you'd like to share here?
Email your article to cjacobs@cityofypsilanti.com